CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for populating a database, the method comprising:

providing a database having a schema;

inferring from the schema dependencies among a fact table and related dimension tables; and

inserting, in accordance with the dependencies, rows of data into the fact table and rows of data into the dimension tables.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein inferring dependencies further comprises:

selecting from metadata describing a schema for the database expressions of dependencies; and

inserting the expressions of dependencies into a dependency list.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein inserting rows of data further comprises:

determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into the fact table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, inserting

a row of dimension data into a dimension table related to the fact table through the foreign key.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein inserting rows of data further comprises:

determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into a first dimension table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, inserting a row of dimension data into a second dimension table related to the first dimension table through the foreign key.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein inserting rows of data further comprises:

reading the rows of data from a first database, the first database comprising dependencies among tables in the database; and

inserting rows of data into a second database, the second database comprising at least the same dependencies as in the first database.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein a dependency comprises a rule for the database, enforced by a database management system, that a first record in a first table must exist in the database before a second record in a second table may be inserted in the database.

7. A system for populating a database, the system comprising:

means for providing a database having a schema;

means for inferring from the schema dependencies among a fact table and related dimension tables; and

means for inserting, in accordance with the dependencies, rows of data into the fact table and rows of data into the dimension tables.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein means for inferring dependencies further comprises:

means for selecting from metadata describing a schema for the database expressions of dependencies; and

means for inserting the expressions of dependencies into a dependency list.

9. The system of claim 7 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means for determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into the fact table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, means for inserting a row of dimension data into a dimension table related to the fact table through the foreign key.

10. The system of claim 7 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means for determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into a first dimension table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, means for inserting a row of dimension data into a second dimension table related to the first dimension table through the foreign key.

11. The system of claim 7 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means for reading the rows of data from a first database, the first database comprising dependencies among tables in the database; and

means for inserting rows of data into a second database, the second database comprising at least the same dependencies as in the first database.

12. The system of claim 7 wherein a dependency comprises a rule for the database, enforced by a database management system, that a first record in a first table must exist in the database before a second record in a second table may be inserted in the database.

13. A computer program product for populating a database, the computer program product comprising:

a recording medium;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for providing a database having a schema;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for inferring from the schema dependencies among a fact table and related dimension tables; and

means, recorded on the recording medium, for inserting, in accordance with the dependencies, rows of data into the fact table and rows of data into the dimension tables.

14. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein means for inferring dependencies further comprises:

means, recorded on the recording medium, for selecting from metadata describing a schema for the database expressions of dependencies; and

means, recorded on the recording medium, for inserting the expressions of dependencies into a dependency list.

15. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means, recorded on the recording medium, for determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into the fact table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, means, recorded on the recording medium, for inserting a row of dimension data into a dimension table related to the fact table through the foreign key.

16. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means, recorded on the recording medium, for determining whether related dimension data exists for each foreign key in each row of data inserted into a first dimension table; and

for each foreign key for which related dimension data does not exist, means, recorded on the recording medium, for inserting a row of dimension data into a second dimension table related to the first dimension table through the foreign key.

17. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein means for inserting rows of data further comprises:

means, recorded on the recording medium, for reading the rows of data from a first database, the first database comprising dependencies among tables in the database; and

means, recorded on the recording medium, for inserting rows of data into a second database, the second database comprising at least the same dependencies as in the first database.

18. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein a dependency comprises a rule for the database, enforced by a database management system, that a first record in a first table must exist in the database before a second record in a second table may be inserted in the database.